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ABSTRACT

The continuation of an earlier study examined to what extent students change in their use of evaluative criteria in writing between the fifth and sixth grade. Twenty-five students were interviewed in fifth and sixth grade. In the fifth grade, all students were taught writing by the same teacher who emphasized student choice of topic, recursive steps in the process of writing, peer and teacher response to drafts, and discussion of the qualities of good writing across tasks. In the sixth grade, three different teachers taught the students, all using a variation of a traditional combination of English textbook exercises and teacher writing assignments with emphasis on basic skills. Results indicated that there were no developmental patterns by race or sex, and few differences in the amount of talk or variety of criteria. Text-based criteria constituted the majority of comments, and changes were apparent in distribution of text-based criteria, best summarized by achievement level. It is possible that school pressures toward a utilitarian view of writing had a significant influence on children's evaluative criteria. (Nineteen references are included; three appendixes, and two tables of data are attached.) (PRA)

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Developmental Trends in Middle School Students' Criteria for Evaluating Writing

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CS212892

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The ability to stand aside from the written page and assess what has been written is a necessary skill of all writers. Even the youngest and most inexperienced writers have been observed as they re-read and voiced opinions about their texts (Dyson, 1982; Graves, 1984). Although primary attention has been focused on assessments made during the process of writing (Beach, 1976, 1979; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1983), increasingly, professional recommendations for writing instruction have emphasized the parallel importance of post-writing evaluative conferences to help students learn to be effective evaluators of writing (Atwell, 1987; Hansen, 1987; Hillocks, 1984· Murray, 1985).

The small but growing body of research that examines the content of verbalized student evaluations of their own completed texts and those of their peers indicates that students formulate evaluative criteria at an early age, but their judgments differ in important ways from those of teachers or mature writers. Studies of children's verbalized post-writing evaluations of text (Applebee, 1978; Graves, 1984; Hilgers, 1984, 1986; Newkirk, 1982) show a general trend from global, affectively based, idiosyncratic judgments toward multi-faceted comparisons of the actual and an ideal text. At the older elementary level, of interest in this paper, the voiced judgments of students, even those considered to be competent writers, may be incomplete and incoherent, focusing on one aspect of the text at a time. Students of this age are still moving toward mature evaluations that prioritize and integrate multiple criteria into a more sophisticated whole.

In a different approach to conceptualizing the development of young writers, Scardamalia and Bereiter (1983) created a model which attempts to describe changes in mental processing as students move from less to more

sophisticated writing. Although not strictly a developmental model, it is based on their studies of older elementary writers, and addresses problems believed to be characteristic of writers of this age. They propose that an immature writer engages in "knowledge telling," a rather straightforward strategy of presenting relevant and sufficient content; whereas a more sophisticated writer engages in "knowledge transforming," in which the "rhetorical problem" (context and audience) transforms the author's entire sense of how to present ideas. Since evaluation criteria should reflect these two strategies, we would expect to see parallel developmental trends in children's criteria use.

If elementary and middle school teachers are to make reasoned decisions about instruction based on diagnosis of students' growing concepts of good writing, a better understanding is needed of the developmental patterns and student differences associated with assessment of writing in these critical transition years (Freedman, Dyson, Flower, & Chafe, 1987). To this end we have gathered a large body of data systematically categorized to explore the students' use of evaluative criteria in specified naturalistic context over two years of schooling, fifth and sixth Grades. In an earlier paper, we reported the categories of criteria developed from a data-driven analysis of student comments made during the fifth grade year (Potter, Busching, McCormick, Wilkes & Slesinger, 1987).

Five major kinds of criteria (called **Criteria Areas**) were derived from this earlier analysis: **Topic, Text-based, Non-Text Associations, Process, and Surface Qualities (See Appendix A).** Topic criteria are those that refer to the subject of the story, while **Text-based** criteria include a range of responses based on the characteristics and content of the text itself. **Non-text Associations** are those criteria that refer to students' personal experiences related to the content of

the story, but not included in it. **Process** criteria for judgments based on events that occurred in the production and sharing of the story. **Surface Qualities** criteria are evaluative statements that refer to mechanics, spelling, or other aspects of the image of the text on paper.

In the earlier study, the most extensively used of the Criteria Areas was overwhelmingly **Text-based**, which was used for approximately 70% of all statements and contained 11 subcategories. The most frequently used (each at least 10% and together more than 80% of the Text-based total) were:

General-states feeling tone for text without specifics

Information-refers to elaboration, important facts, reasoning in the text

Makes Sense-refers to clearness and relevance, organization, repetition in the text

Features to Create Interest-refers to creativity, vivid language, emotions, humor, action in text

Identification-indicates identification with characters in the text

Repeats text-repeats portions of text without explanation

Characteristics associated with students' use of criteria in the fifth grade have also been previously reported. There was a clear relationship between achievement and both the use of specific text characteristics as criteria (Busching, McCormick, & Potter, 1989) and the ability to interpret correctly teacher priorities (McCormick, Potter, Busching, Wilkes, & Slesinger, 1988), although individual variation within achievement levels was high.

The present investigation continues our study of this group of children, presenting longitudinal data from a second interview we conducted with each of them during the sixth grade. There were a number of questions we wished to

address: To what extent would these students change (or remain stable) in their use of evaluative criteria? Would it be possible to detect instructional influences on any changes that occurred? What could we learn about what represents "advanced" versus "less advanced" criteria by examining growth from fifth to sixth grade, and by contrasting criteria used by children whose test scores placed them at different levels of achievement? What might we learn about the development of our group of lower achievers that would be helpful in designing instruction for these less successful students?

Method

Subjects. Twenty-five students, 11 boys and 14 girls, 5 black and 20 white, were interviewed in fifth grade and again in sixth grade. In the fifth grade, all students were taught writing by the same teacher who emphasized student choice of topic, recursive steps in the process of writing, peer and teacher responses to drafts, and discussion of the qualities of good writing across tasks. In the sixth grade, three different teachers taught the students, all using a variation of a traditional combination of English textbook exercises and teacher writing assignments with emphasis on basic skills. Student achievement levels in the fifth grade ranged from the first to the tenth decile on the CTBS test. Students scoring in the upper five deciles were designated as high achievers (n=12), and those scoring in the lower five deciles as low achievers (n=13).

Texts. Two kinds of texts were used: (1) Teachers provided samples of the children's own writing consisting of three or four texts the child had written within five weeks of the interview. (2) Four texts attributed to a fictional peer were constructed by the researchers to vary (high/low) on the dimensions of student interest in topic (determined through pilot testing) and writing

craftsmanship (operationally defined by the features of information, precise language, style, clarity, and story structure). Copies of the stories are provided in Appendix B.

Interview procedures. Each student was individually interviewed by a trained interviewer who was familiar to the students, according to an informal procedure similar to their teacher conferences but with uniform presentation of questions. After reading each group of stories (Own and Constructed) aloud, students were asked to designate the best, next best, third best, and last of each group. They were then asked to give their reasons for their rankings for only the best, next best, and last stories in turn. Students then repeated this procedure for the remaining group of stories. The order of presentation of Own versus Constructed texts was counterbalanced.

Data Treatment. Interviews were recorded on audio tape. The transcribed student responses were segmented into idea units ("statements"), and then categorized using standard procedures for assuring inter-rater reliability. A content-driven approach was used to develop the category system as described above and provided in Appendix A. Definitions and examples of the criteria are given in Appendix C.

Results and Discussion

Rankings of constructed texts. An examination of the order in which the students in sixth grade ranked the constructed texts showed that the rankings were quite similar to their earlier preferences. As in the fifth grade, high achievers' rankings were more sensitive to the dimension of craftsmanship than those of low achievers, ranking the two high craft stories (A Terrible Snake and Waiting While My Mother Shops) higher than the two low craft stories. The low achievers again did not clearly differentiate among the stories on the basis of

craftsmanship.

Number of criteria by child and text characteristics. Segmentation of students' justifications of story rankings yielded approximately the same total number of criteria per child across both years, 15.6 in the sixth grade as compared to 14.3 in the fifth grade. The range was larger for sixth graders, from 5 to 25 as compared to from 9 to 21. As in the fifth grade, gender and race had virtually no effect on total number of comments. In the sixth grade, high achievers offered more statements than low achievers (17.25 vs. 14, with a range of from 10 to 25 vs. from 5 to 22), whereas in fifth grade there had been no differences in the number of statements by achievement level. There were no differences at either grade level in number of statements the students made about their own as compared to the constructed stories, or, for that matter, positive as compared to negative statements.

Student Use of Criteria Area. Surprisingly, for the group as a whole, there were no significant developmental differences in the pattern of statements across the five Criteria Areas (See Table 1). (Proportions of each child's total number of statements from which means were computed were used in this and other analyses in order to control for the range of number of statements per child.) This finding was unexpected considering that the students' own texts in the sixth grade were very different in content and form from their fifth grade texts. As in the fifth grade, Text-based Criteria were again overwhelmingly the most frequent (See Table 1), with approximately 70% of the statements of this type, whereas the other four Criteria Areas each accounted for from 5 - 10% of the comments.

An examination of developmental differences within achievement level indicated a trend for low achievers to evaluate stories less on the basis of Non-

text Associations in the sixth grade. Fifth grade low achievers (but not high achievers) had frequently utilized what can be considered an immature strategy of offering personal associations as criteria for evaluation, but had reduced the use of this strategy close to the low level of high achievers by sixth grade (See Table 1). This suggests that these low achievers were slower in their developmental progress, but were moving along a developmental curve believed to be characteristic of all writers (e.g., Hilgers, 1986; Newkirk, 1987).

Student Stance as Reader versus Author. Text-based statements were analyzed to examine evaluative stance; that is, whether students responded to the evaluative task from the viewpoint of a reader or of an author. ("The story had... " or "It was ..." vs. "He did..." or "I tried to..."). In general, across both years, both high and low achieving students spoke overwhelmingly more often as a reader (close to 80%) as compared to an author-based viewpoint (close to 20%). However, when they were discussing their own stories, students were more likely to speak from the stance of an author when they were older (18% in fifth grade vs. 35% in sixth grade). This finding suggests a growing sense of authorship for their own work, but no change in their tendency to infer an author for the work of others.

Student Use of Text-based Criteria. As Table 2 indicates, the students did make changes in their proportional use of categories within the major Criteria Area of Text-based as they matured ($F=8.86$, $p > .001$). This proportion was computed first for each child who used any of these six text-based categories, and represents the child's percentage of statements for each category divided by that child's total number of statements for all six categories. The mean proportions in Table 2 are the average of these individual proportions.

A noticeable change was students' decreased use of Repeats Text statements

(repeating parts of the texts without verbalized criteria), mainly due to a drop in its use by low achievers. We believe that Repeats Text comments, which were mainly positive, may have been used by low achieving students who were trying to express their felt sense that a certain part of the text had positive qualities, but were unable to translate this appreciation into words that explicated the nature of these qualities. Therefore, the decreased proportion of statements in this category suggests that growth in the ability to articulate a criterion (or growth in the understanding that they should <u>try</u> to articulate a criterion) had occurred, a possibility that will be discussed below.

From the standpoint of the development of students' literary involvement in stories, the decreased use of Identification statements was less promising. This category, which had comprised 16% of fifth graders' text-based comments, fell to zero in sixth grade. Other developmental changes (increased Information and Makes Sense and fewer Features to Create Interest) were more ambiguous and are explored in the section below.

Patterns of Student use of Text-based Criteria. In order to better understand the nature of these whole-group changes, we looked more closely at differences related to student achievement, text, and valence. Did high and low achievers exhibit different patterns of development? How did the kind of text - their own or constructed - relate to these changes? How did these changes relate to whether student focused on strengths or weaknesses in their writing? The patterns for three of the criteria - Makes Sense, Information, and Features to Create Interest - which yielded potentially interesting developmental trends are discussed.

For their own stories, high achievers sharply increased the use of both Makes Sense and Information criteria, and made a puzzling shift in valence. In

the fifth grade, they rather infrequently pointed out their problems with coherence or details, but in sixth grade they frequently pointed out the fact that their stories were coherent and detailed. On the other hand, low achievers showed virtually no change in their use of Makes Sense or Information criteria for their own texts from one year to the next. In both years low achievers used these two categories primarily to describe negative aspects of their own texts.

A different pattern of use emerges for Makes Sense and Information criteria when applied to constructed texts. High achievers again used these categories more frequently in the sixth grade, a trend which was especially marked for Makes Sense. They used Information positively for both years. Makes Sense, primarily a negative criteria category, was slightly more positive in sixth grade. Low achievers in the sixth grade also applied Makes Sense and Information criteria more frequently for constructed texts, with virtually no change in their tendency to use Makes Sense negatively and Information positively.

We also explored the general decrease in the use of Features to Create Interest, looking first at students' evaluation of their own stories. High achievers sharply decreased their criteria related to features to create reader interest, and surprisingly, shifted from application to positive aspects of their writing to almost one-half negative applications. This was in marked contrast to low achievers, who slightly increased their use of this category for their own texts, and shifted its focus from negative features in fifth grade to positive ones in sixth grade. However, looking at evaluation of constructed texts, high and low achievers alike used Features to Create Interest slightly less frequently in sixth grade than they had fifth grade, continuing to use it almost entirely to point out positive aspects of texts.

Summary

In summary, we saw no developmental patterns by race or sex, and few differences in the amount of talk or variety of criteria. Although some low achievers offered fewer comments, most of these students continued to readily apply a wide variety of useful criteria to the stories. Although not a focus of this paper, it should be mentioned that additional Text-based criteria - Moral Lesson, Reality, Literary Features, and Language Features - continued to be mentioned, although with low frequency. No difference in the proportion of comments related to the topic, aspects of the text itself, processes of writing or surface features was observed. Text-based criteria continued to constitute the majority of comments. When discussing their own stories in the sixth grade, students were more likely than in fifth grade to speak from the stance of self as author.

Changes were apparent in distribution of Text-based criteria, best summarized by achievement level. High achievers increased their focus on Makes Sense and Information criteria both for stories written by others and for their own stories. A puzzling aspect of this change was that they used Makes Sense primarily to note flaws in fifth grade, but began applying it to positive instances in sixth grade. At the same time their previously intense focus on features that made the writing interesting sharply declined, especially for their own writing.

Low achievers in the sixth grade justified their rankings less often by just repeating text and exhibited shifts in their verbalization of criteria for the writing of others, but made much less change when discussing their own writing. For the constructed texts, they increased their attention to whether the text made sense or contained information, and focused less on Features to

Create Interest. For their own work, the only noteworthy changes were a slight increase in Features to Create Interest and a slight decrease in Makes Sense.

How can we account for these changes and what implications do they hold for educational practice? One explanation that could be advanced is that school pressures toward a utilitarian view of writing had a significant influence on children's evaluative criteria. In support of this position, it is interesting to note that independent data gathered on the teachers' approach to writing indicated that the sixth grade teachers emphasized achievement of basic writing skills as defined on the state essay writing exam, whereas the fifth grade teachers emphasized a wide variety of forms and purposes for writing, integrating responses to literature and responses to classroom writing in discussions. Creativity and attracting audience interest were celebrated. One could reasonably attribute at least part of the strong tendency of sixth grade students to verbalize basics of writing - sufficient information and clarity of message - to the tendency of high achievers to forgo comments about creativity due to classroom pressures in this direction. From this viewpoint it is regrettable that the high achievers, all of whom easily passed minimum standards in writing, did not experience a more well-balanced program that would sensitize them toward ever more subtle and integrated evaluative criteria. For the low achievers, most of whom were in extreme academic difficulty, it is possible that the more utilitarian sixth grade program may have had some benefits; i.e., half of them were able to pass the state basic essay test in sixth and eighth grade.

A qualitative comparison of comments and student texts will assist in exploring whether changes in the students' texts across the year created the changes in their Text-based criteria. For example, did high achievers focus less on positive instances of Features to Create Interest because their texts were

less interesting? Did they comment more - and more positively - on Makes Sense and Information because they were aware that their texts had greater clarity and fuller elaboration?

An alternative explanation of the changes we observed is that they represent genuine developmental progress (which will become clear with additional longitudinal data), which can provide insight into student verbalization of more and less advanced criteria. For example, could the General Text-based statements be viewed as evidence of an unarticulated integrated assessment of the text, and the increase in this category indicate that some older students were reaching to express more integrated evaluations (Newkirk, 1982)? Does the increased use of Makes Sense for constructed texts show that, as students mature, they become confident evaluators who now attribute lack of clarity to a text, rather than to their own failure to understand?

The trends found in these analyses and additional questions about individual patterns in students' development will be examined in qualitative analysis of student transcripts. We are interested in including in this analysis an examination of the developmental trends predicted on the basis of other studies. For example, a better understanding of students' possible development from knowledge telling to knowledge transformation strategies (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987) cannot be determined by numerical analysis of categories, but requires qualitative inspection of texts and comments. The interesting trends in student evaluation of writing exhibited by these students appear to indicate an intertwining of developmental and instructional influences. Our planned interviews with these students in the tenth grade will, we hope, provide additional insight. Continued study of students across grade levels will provide data that could permit us to view development in a more complex manner,

identifying changes which represent temporary regressions and multiple developmental paths.

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APPENDIX A: CATEGORIES OF STUDENT EVALUATIVE RESPONSES

TOPIC

- GENERAL
- IMPORTANCE
- INTEREST LEVEL
- OTHER

TEXT-BASED

- GENERAL
- REPEATS TEXT
- INFORMATION
  - General
  - Elaboration
  - Reasons
  - Other
- MAKES SENSE
  - General
  - Clarity
  - Repetitiveness
  - Relevance
  - Organization
  - Other
- FEATURES TO CREATE INTEREST
  - General
  - Creativity
  - Emotions
  - Humor
  - Action
  - Characterization
  - Style
  - Other
- REALITY
  - General
  - Credibility
  - Real Life
  - Other
- IDENTIFICATION
- LANGUAGE FEATURES
  - Word Choice
  - Sentences and Paragraphs
  - Other
- LITERARY FEATURES
  - Plot
  - Characters
  - Forms/Genres
  - Matches Requirement
  - Other
- MORAL LESSON
- AGE APPROPRIATENESS
- OTHER

NON-TEXT ASSOCIATION

- GENERAL
- PERSONAL EXPERIENCE
- NON PERSONAL EVENTS
- OTHER

PROCESS

- GENERAL
- EFFORT
- AUDIENCE REACTION
- STEPS IN PROCESS
- SELF AS WRITER
- OTHER

SURFACE QUALITIES

- GENERAL
- NEATNESS
- SPACING
- HANDWRITING
- MECHANICS
- USAGE
- LENGTH
- ART WORK
- OTHER

NOT INTERPRETABLE

Appendix B

Constructed Stories

	HIGH CRAFT	LOW CRAFT
High Topic	**A TERRIBLE SNAKE** When I was five years old, my grandma chopped off the head of a snake with a hoe. She saved my life! I was walking up to the back porch when I saw the terrible snake right in front of me. It hissed. "Help! Help!" I called. Grandma came running. When she saw the big snake, she took the hoe and chopped its head right off. I was shaking and crying because I was so scared. Grandma hugged me, and we watched the snake's long brown body wiggle on the ground. My grandma is the greatest.	**SPACE ADVENTURE** I'm going into space. Whoom! I can go far. I went out in space on the space ship. There are lots of places to go in space, and we went very far past many stars. He was a big creature, and he was in space, too. The space ship was great. I know how to go into space. You go in the ship out in space. I saw stars and galaxies as we flew. The stars were very nice to see and interesting. I liked the stars. I saw stars on T.V. They were nice.
Low Topic	**WAITING WHILE MY MOTHER SHOPS** When my mother takes me to the furniture store with her, I pretend that I can buy anything in the store. I look for furniture for my room. Last time I found a blue velvet chair with big fluffy pillows. "This is like sitting on a cloud," I said, as I sank into the soft chair. Then I saw a crazy lamp. The light bulb was a coconut. Two monkeys climbed up to get it. "What a crazy lamp!" Just then I heard my mom calling, "Get over here. We're going to look at tables now." I didn't want to do it, but sometimes you have to do what your mother says.	**SCHOOL** You need books, pencils, and other supplies and other things. I am not late to school because I always get ready on time. I am always on time for school. School is nice for learning all the things. It has six grades, and then you go to another school. Children learn about what you need in life, like things you need to know in reading and in math. I am good in math, and I get good grades. I had a good paper today. My sister has good papers, too.

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CRITERIA CATEGORIES, DEFINITIONS, AND EXAMPLES FOR THE FIVE CRITERIA AREAS

TEXT-BASED

Refers to characteristics, qualities, and content of the text itself (other than topic or surface features).

General: States only general feeling, tone or preference for the text as a whole without reference to any specific text characteristics.

-- and that just isn't a very good story to me its all right but its not my favorite one.

Repeats Text: Refers to parts of the text without reasons for the choice. Repeats the text, either verbatim or in paraphrase.

--Um (long pause) I like the part where it says I am not late to school because I always get up on time (uh huh) and school is nice for learning all things...

Information: Focuses on the presence, sufficiency, and adequacy of the information present in the text.

It just, it tells more things about what the story is about.

Makes Sense: Refers to disruptions in the meaning of the text or whether the text is easy or difficult to understand.

I really didn't understand it cuz ... like um he was a big cr- where it says there are lots of places to go in space and we went very far past many stars. He was a big creature. They don't tell when they seen the big creature and everything.

Features to Create Interest: Refers to interest level of the text or describes qualities that are commonly assumed to create this interest.

It's just... it's just dull, it doesn't, you don't . The pencil's all mine! What next!

Reality: Focuses on whether or not the text is true, believable, or a fantasy.

Cuz um it's true. And it tells the story of what happened to my dog and everything.

Identification: Refers to personal similarities (or dissimilarities) with characters, situations or events described in the text.

I'd probably do the same thing. I wouldn't stand there watching the snake's head.

Language Features: Refers to words, sentences or other linguistic features without giving the detail or reasons required for "Features to Create Interest" or "Makes Sense" categories.

monsters and all like clouds, cloud men and stuff, they have a rainbow...

PROCESS

Evaluates text based on references to processes of creating and sharing/publishing text.

General: Process-related statement too vague to be further categorized.

Effort: Refers to amount of difficulty or ease demanded by the writing tasks or to time required;

--I just kind of threw it down so that's why I put it last.

Audience reaction: Refers to an actual or projected audience response to the text.

--I guess because the class liked it.

Steps in process: Refers explicitly to steps in the process of creating and sharing/publishing text, such as selecting topic, writing or revising drafts, reading to an audience, and copying over.

--I pretty much wrote it down the way it is but I put in two, some more drafts...and stuff to see if that was the best.

Self as writer: Refers to own thoughts about personal experiences, ambitions, or development as a writer.

SURFACE QUALITIES

Refers to mechanics, spelling, or another aspect of the linguistic correctness or to its image on paper.

General: Doesn't give sufficient information to categorize further.

--Well I made a lot of obvious mistakes in that one.

Neatness: Refers to the overall appearance of the text or to a specific part as being neat or messy.

--And its neat and everything to me it is.

Spacing: Refers to how the writing is organized or placed on the page.

Handwriting: Refers to the quality of handwriting.

Because...this story didn't have...that much good words in it.

Age Appropriateness: Refers to whether the text or part of the text is appropriate for the author's (or the reader's) age, grade or ability level.

It sounds like a little kid wrote it.

Literary Features: Refers to the following types of literature or literary features such as characters, plots or beginnings and endings without giving reasons for the choice.

--It kinda took after a...nursery rhyme or story.

TOPIC

Refers to the subject or topic of the text but not to events, characters, or other specific features of the text.

General: The student states only general feeling tone or preference for the topic.

--'Cause I'm not crazy about space.

Importance: Cites the topic of the text for its importance.

Okay. (pause) A lot of people should know about it (diabetes).

Interest Level: Cites the subject of the text as being interesting or exciting (or not).

Other: Cites qualities of the topic other than those specified as criteria.

NON-TEXT ASSSOCIATION

Students evaluate the text based on events and ideas from their own experiences which are suggested by or loosely related to the context of the text.

General: Student statement are such that it is not possible to distinguish between subcategories.

Personal Experience: Refers to events/happenings in his or her own life or in the life of family and friends.

---'Cause I love my dog. And ... I like to help my dog and he likes to help me. Cuz, uh, he almost stepped on a rattlesnake. He went and jumped XXX and grabbed it...He live on a farm. (None of the events mentioned appear in the text.)

Non-Personal Events: Refers to events or people that he or she has heard about or has read about (for example, books, TV shows, movies, historical incidents).

---(Comments based on a book report on James and the Giant Peach) When he saw in the...but I ain't, I ain't put this in the story, but when he saw ...the white thing come XXX like

--I can't read some of my writing.

Mechanics: Refers to spelling, punctuation or capitalization.

--and it got periods. It got quotation marks.

Usage: Refers to correctness of word usage, form, or sentence construction.

Length: Refers to whether the piece of writing is of the correct or desired length or too long or too short.

--and it was supposed to be a page, 1 page and a half a page but I didn't write that much.

Art Work: Refers to artistic embellishments not part of text or handwriting.

--I drew a picture of the little martian and I cut it out.

NOT INTERPRETABLE **Statement does not provide enough information to understand the category applied.**

--I thought so (uh). For - for something that short (uh). I don't know (uh). I can think about it, yeah.

TABLE 1

Mean Proportion of Student Statements for Each Category Area

Category Area	5th grade proportion	6th grade proportion
Topic		
All *	.09	.06
Low **	.10	.09
High ***	.08	.04
Text-based		
All	.69	.71
Low	.62	.68
High	.78	.74
Non-text Association		
All	.08	.06
Low	.15	.08
High	.01	.05
Process		
All	.08	.10
Low	.07	.09
High	.10	.11
Surface Qualities		
All	.05	.06
Low	.06	.05
High	.03	.06

* All students n=25
** Low achievers n=12
*** High achievers n=13

TABLE 2

Mean Proportion of Student Statements Within Major Text-based Criteria

Text-based Criteria	5th grade proportion	6th grade proportion
General		
All *	.12	.20
Low **	.09	.14
High ***	.15	.26
Repeats Text		
All	.19	.11
Low	.28	.18
High	.07	.04
Information		
All	.12	.25
Low	.16	.32
High	.08	.18
Makes Sense		
All	.12	.28
Low	.11	.23
High	.14	.34
Features to Create Interest		
All	.29	.15
Low	.14	.13
High	.46	.17
Identification		
All	.16	0
Low	.22	.0
High	.09	.0

* All students using these criteria n=24
** Low achievers n=12
*** High achievers n=12